

Remarks

Claims 1-14 and 16-21 were pending in this application and were rejected. By this Amendment, claims 1-4, 7, 8, 14, and 17 have been amended, claims 5 and 19 have been cancelled, and new claims 22 and 23 have been added. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-14 and 16-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. For clarification, the specification has been amended to more distinctly describe the fibrous layer. Consequently, Applicants believe this rejection has been overcome.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8, 10-12, 14, and 16-21 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,431,995 to Narita et al. Narita et al. '995 recites a sheet molding compound having an inner layer, cloth layers adhered to the inner layer, and resin surface layers "integrally connected" to the inner layer by way of the cloth layers (column 2, lines 14-22). The cloth layer prevents hollow filler material in the inner layer from passing to the resin surface layers in order to prevent surface defects (column 2, lines 60-64). Claim 1 has been amended to more distinctly claim the present invention. In particular, amended claim 1 recites a molding material "adapted for use in multiple layers" which differs from the sheet molding compound disclosed in Narita et al. '995. Also, amended claim 1 recites that the fibrous layer "allows entrapped air to pass out of the material during processing" which is not disclosed in Narita et al. '995. As such, the § 102(b) rejection of amended claim 1 is respectfully believed to be improper and should be withdrawn. Since the remaining claims pending in the application depend on claim 1 the rejection of these claims is improper and should be withdrawn for the same reasons.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9 and 13 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,431,995 to Narita et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,439,627 to De Jager.

Applicants believe that this rejection is now moot due to the amendment to claim 1 as discussed above.

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachment

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**In The Specification**

[The fibres may be used alone or in combination.] The fibrous layer may include any woven, non-woven, or other fibrous material. For example, fibres may be used in the form of a tissue, chopped strand mat, continuous mat, woven fabrics, stitched fabrics, or simple rovings. Any suitable fibre size may be used. Particularly preferred are E-glass yarns having a filament diameter of 5 to 13 µm and 11 to 136 tex or E-glass rovings having a filament diameter of 10 to 16 µm and 600 to 2400 tex. The fibrous material may be preformed before being laid onto the resin layer or alternatively, loose fibres may simply be laid [on to] onto the resin layer.

In the Claims

1. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material adapted for use in multiple layers comprising:

a resin layer [of resin material and] having at least one surface;

a fibrous layer conjoined to the resin layer along the at least one surface [thereof a] wherein the fibrous layer[, said] is held to the resin layer by inherent tack of the at least one surface such that the fibrous layer is at least partially unimpregnated with the resin layer to allow[ing] entrapped air to pass out of the material during processing [of the material].

2. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to [C]claim 1 wherein a first fibrous layer is conjoined to [the] an upper surface of the resin layer and a second fibrous layer is conjoined to [the] a lower surface of the resin layer.

3. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to [C]claim 2 wherein the first and second fibrous layers are formed from the same material.

4. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to [C]claim 2 wherein the first and second fibrous layers are formed from different materials.

7. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to claim 1 wherein a tackifier and a binder are applied to [at least one] an outer surface of the [at least one] fibrous layer.

8. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to claim 1 wherein the fibrous layer is continuous.

14. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material according to claim 1 wherein the resin [one or more fibrous] layer[s of the material] is a conventional prepreg.

17. (Twice amended) A preform multi-layered moulding material for use in the production of the [a] surface layer according to claim 16 [in which] wherein a woven fibrous layer is conjoined to a first [one] surface and a nonwoven fibrous layer is conjoined to a second [the opposing] surface disposed opposite the first surface.